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APPLICATION NO.	FILING DATE	FIRST NAMED INVENTOR	ATTORNEY DOCKET NO.	CONFIRMATION NO.
10/674,236	09/29/2003	Frederick E. Shelton IV	END5126.0517368	1885

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FROST BROWN TODD, LLC
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EXAMINER

NASH, BRIAN D

ART UNIT	PAPER NUMBER
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3721

NOTIFICATION DATE	DELIVERY MODE
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01/24/2008

ELECTRONIC

Please find below and/or attached an Office communication concerning this application or proceeding.

The time period for reply, if any, is set in the attached communication.

Notice of the Office communication was sent electronically on above-indicated "Notification Date" to the following e-mail address(es):

dbell@fbtlaw.com

Office Action Summary

Application No.

10/674,236

Applicant(s)

SHELTON ET AL.

Examiner

Brian Nash

Art Unit

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-- The MAILING DATE of this communication appears on the cover sheet with the correspondence address --
Period for Reply

A SHORTENED STATUTORY PERIOD FOR REPLY IS SET TO EXPIRE 3 MONTH(S) OR THIRTY (30) DAYS, WHICHEVER IS LONGER, FROM THE MAILING DATE OF THIS COMMUNICATION.

- Extensions of time may be available under the provisions of 37 CFR 1.136(a). In no event, however, may a reply be timely filed after SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- If NO period for reply is specified above, the maximum statutory period will apply and will expire SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- Failure to reply within the set or extended period for reply will, by statute, cause the application to become ABANDONED (35 U.S.C. § 133). Any reply received by the Office later than three months after the mailing date of this communication, even if timely filed, may reduce any earned patent term adjustment. See 37 CFR 1.704(b).

Status

- 1) ☒ Responsive to communication(s) filed on 15 October 2007.
- 2a) ☐ This action is **FINAL**. 2b) ☒ This action is non-final.
- 3) ☐ Since this application is in condition for allowance except for formal matters, prosecution as to the merits is closed in accordance with the practice under *Ex parte Quayle*, 1935 C.D. 11, 453 O.G. 213.

Disposition of Claims

- 4) ☒ Claim(s) 1-10 is/are pending in the application.
- 4a) Of the above claim(s) 7-9 is/are withdrawn from consideration.
- 5) ☐ Claim(s) _____ is/are allowed.
- 6) ☒ Claim(s) 1-6 and 10 is/are rejected.
- 7) ☐ Claim(s) _____ is/are objected to.
- 8) ☐ Claim(s) _____ are subject to restriction and/or election requirement.

Application Papers

- 9) ☒ The specification is objected to by the Examiner.
- 10) ☒ The drawing(s) filed on 18 March 2004 is/are: a) ☒ accepted or b) ☐ objected to by the Examiner.
Applicant may not request that any objection to the drawing(s) be held in abeyance. See 37 CFR 1.85(a).
Replacement drawing sheet(s) including the correction is required if the drawing(s) is objected to. See 37 CFR 1.121(d).
- 11) ☒ The oath or declaration is objected to by the Examiner. Note the attached Office Action or form PTO-152.

Priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119

- 12) ☐ Acknowledgment is made of a claim for foreign priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(a)-(d) or (f).
- a) ☐ All b) ☐ Some * c) ☐ None of:
- ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received.
 - ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received in Application No. _____.
 - ☐ Copies of the certified copies of the priority documents have been received in this National Stage application from the International Bureau (PCT Rule 17.2(a)).

* See the attached detailed Office action for a list of the certified copies not received.

Attachment(s)

- 1) ☒ Notice of References Cited (PTO-892)
- 2) ☐ Notice of Draftsperson's Patent Drawing Review (PTO-948)
- 3) ☒ Information Disclosure Statement(s) (PTO/SB/08)
Paper No(s)/Mail Date 9/09/03, 5/5/05.

- 4) ☐ Interview Summary (PTO-413)
Paper No(s)/Mail Date. _____.
- 5) ☐ Notice of Informal Patent Application
- 6) ☐ Other: _____.

DETAILED ACTION

Examiner's Comments

1. This action is in response to applicant's election received 10/15/2007.

Applicant elected Group I, claims 1-6 and 10 drawn to a surgical stapling device having a firing mechanism with a linked rack without traverse.

2. The pending claims remain 1-10; however claims 7-9 are withdrawn from further consideration pursuant to 37 CFR 1.142(b) as being drawn to a nonelected invention, there being no allowable generic or linking claim.

Oath/Declaration

3. The oath or declaration is defective. A new oath or declaration in compliance with 37 CFR 1.67(a) identifying this application by application number and filing date is required. See MPEP §§ 602.01 and 602.02.

The oath or declaration is defective because it does not state that the person making the oath or declaration acknowledges the duty to disclose to the Office all information known to the person to be material to patentability as defined in 37 CFR 1.56. Specifically, the correct statement should read, "I acknowledge the duty to disclose information which is material to patentability of this application in accordance with Title 37, Code of Federal Regulations Section 1.56."

Specification

4. The disclosure is objected to because of the following informalities: missing US serial numbers on page one of specifications need to be updated and if now US patents, specifications should reflect current status. Appropriate correction is required.

Double Patenting

5. The nonstatutory double patenting rejection is based on a judicially created doctrine grounded in public policy (a policy reflected in the statute) so as to prevent the unjustified or improper timewise extension of the "right to exclude" granted by a patent and to prevent possible harassment by multiple assignees. See *In re Goodman*, 11 F.3d 1046, 29 USPQ2d 2010 (Fed. Cir. 1993); *In re Longi*, 759 F.2d 887, 225 USPQ 645 (Fed. Cir. 1985); *In re Van Ornum*, 686 F.2d 937, 214 USPQ 761 (CCPA 1982); *In re Vogel*, 422 F.2d 438, 164 USPQ 619 (CCPA 1970); and, *In re Thorington*, 418 F.2d 528, 163 USPQ 644 (CCPA 1969).

A timely filed terminal disclaimer in compliance with 37 CFR 1.321(c) may be used to overcome an actual or provisional rejection based on a nonstatutory double patenting ground provided the conflicting application or patent is shown to be commonly owned with this application. See 37 CFR 1.130(b).

Effective January 1, 1994, a registered attorney or agent of record may sign a terminal disclaimer. A terminal disclaimer signed by the assignee must fully comply with 37 CFR 3.73(b).

6. Claims 1-6 and 10 are rejected on the ground of nonstatutory obviousness-type double patenting as being unpatentable over claims 1-20 of U.S. Patent No. 7,303,108 and claims 1-21 of U.S. Patent No. 7,083,075. Although the conflicting claims are not identical, they are not patentably distinct from each other because each of two above mentioned patents claim obvious variations of the present invention.

Although the conflicting claims are not identical, they are not patentably distinct from each other because a person having ordinary skill in the art would have found the claims to have been obvious variations of the claims of the patents. The claims of the patents and the claims of the present application are both directed to a surgical instrument having an elongate implement portion, a firing mechanism, a closing mechanism, and a release mechanism that locks an end portion of the implement portion. While the claims of the present application and the claims of the patents may have variations and differences in their scope and terminology, the variations and differences would have been obvious to one having ordinary skill in the art.

Claim Objections

7. Claim 10 is objected to because of the following informalities: line 7 is awkwardly phrased and it is suggested that the term "is" be deleted. Appropriate correction is required.

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 112

8. The following is a quotation of the second paragraph of 35 U.S.C. 112:

The specification shall conclude with one or more claims particularly pointing out and distinctly claiming the subject matter which the applicant regards as his invention.

9. Claims 2-3 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 112, second paragraph, as being indefinite for failing to particularly point out and distinctly claim the subject matter which applicant regards as the invention.

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In claim 2 there is insufficient antecedent basis for the terminology "said end effector". In claims 2 and 3, there is insufficient antecedent basis for the terminology "said firing member". Appropriate correction is required.

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 102

10. The following is a quotation of the appropriate paragraphs of 35 U.S.C. 102 that form the basis for the rejections under this section made in this Office action:

A person shall be entitled to a patent unless –

(b) the invention was patented or described in a printed publication in this or a foreign country or in public use or on sale in this country, more than one year prior to the date of application for patent in the United States.

11. Claims 1-6 and 10 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(b) as being anticipated by US 5,762,255 to Chrisman et al. Chrisman et al shows the same surgical instrument as claimed:

With respect to claims 1 and 10, an elongate implement portion (42), a firing mechanism (22,130) capable of producing a motion between an unfired and fired position, a closing mechanism (89) capable of closing and opening the implement portion and a closing release means (24,28) capable of locking the closing mechanism (via pin 48) and responsive to an operator command.

With respect to claim 2, an end effector (40) having an elongate channel (31) connected to a shaft, an anvil (46), pivotally coupled to the elongate channel, a staple cartridge (50) and a firing member (140) that distally terminates in a firing bar (144) capable of actuating the staple cartridge.

With respect to claim 3, a firing mechanism (130) capable of transferring sequential firing strokes to the firing member (140).

With respect to claim 4, a firing mechanism (130) having a means (135,140) for traction biased coupling of multiple firing trigger (22) actuations by an operator.

With respect to claim 5, a firing mechanism (22,130) having a means (140) for linked rack coupling of firing trigger actuations by an operator, (i.e. 140 is a rack and is linked to 144 and is coupled to firing trigger 22).

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12. With respect to claim 6, a firing mechanism (130) having a means (135,140) for traction biased coupling of multiple firing trigger (22) actuations by an operator.

Conclusion

13. The prior art made of record and not relied upon is considered pertinent to applicant's disclosure. Refer to attachment (PTO-892) for notice of references cited and recommended for consideration based on their disclosure of limitations of the claimed invention.

14. Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the examiner should be directed to Brian Nash whose telephone number is 571-272-4465. The examiner can normally be reached on Monday – Thursday from 8 a.m. to 6 p.m.

15. If attempts to reach the examiner by telephone are unsuccessful, the examiner's supervisor, Rinaldi I. Rada can be reached at 571-272-4467. The official fax number for this Group is: 571-273-8300

16. Information regarding the status of an application may be obtained from the Patent Application Information Retrieval (PAIR) system. Status information for published applications may be obtained from either Private PAIR or Public PAIR. Status information for unpublished applications is available through Private PAIR only. For more information about the PAIR system, see <http://pair-direct.uspto.gov>.

Should you have questions on access to the Private PAIR system, contact the Electronic Business Center (EBC) at 866-217-9197 (toll-free).

/Brian D. Nash/
Primary Examiner, Art Unit 3721

1/17/2008